DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 366 523 SO 023 567

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TITLE	West Virginia: A History for Beginners.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-9627486-3-3
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	278p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Trans Allegheny Books, 118 Capitol St., Charleston, WV 25301 ($19.95 plus shipping).
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Instructional Materials (For Learner) (051)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*American Indian Culture; American Indian History; Archaeology; Civil War (United States); *Culture Conflict; Elementary Secondary Education; Food; Historiography; Industrialization; *Land Use; *Local History; *Social Change; *State Government
IDENTIFIERS	French and Indian War; *West Virginia

ABSTRACT

This book on the history of West Virginia emphasizes the differences and similarities among the people inhabiting what is now the state of West Virginia, from prehistoric times to the present. The history focuses on how these people have acted as individuals and in groups such as families, communities, societies, corporations, and government. Studying history helps people understand the social behavior of people who lived in the past. By observing the changes that affected their lives, one also can observe the ways in which society came to be the way it is today. By observing the interaction of a variety of cultures still present in West Virginia today, each within its own distinctive natural environment, students get a command of skills, methods, and concepts that they can apply later to other broader areas. This document is divided into five parts. The first part discusses how West Virginia became a settled frontier. It contains three chapters based on: (1) the prehistory of West Virginia; (2) the first historic West Virginia societies; and (3) cultural encounters. Part 2 explores how West Virginia became a state. The three chapters in this part discuss: (1) land and law; (2) why West Virginia became a state; and (3) state government. The third part is on the development of an industrial society and discusses the industrial period and the economic system. The fourth part deals with becoming a bureaucratic society. Part 5 includes the lives of everyday people, food, clothing, and housing throughout the historical periods. (DK)

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